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## Design-Build

### Better relationships yield better results

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A successful design-build project depends not only on the ability of the designer and contractor to work together, but the success of the design-build team's relationship with key stakeholders.

A particularly problematic project discussed by Don Oberlies, a director with St. Louis, Missouri-based Alberici Constructors Inc. during the annual conference of the Canadian Design-Build Institute in Vancouver in early May illustrates the importance of good relationships.

Alberici was tackling a beverage plant in Peterborough, Ontario but not everyone participated in the review process. The client rushed the design review and failed to consult some of the key users. The result was that costly adjustments were required during the installation of equipment, changes that could have been avoided if the client had taken time to consult everyone.

"We didn't have the right people involved at all stages," Oberlies laments.

The project had other challenges. The objectives were unclear because key stakeholders within the company were at odds over priorities. Since Alberici had stepped in at the mid-point of the planning process, it had to deal with the fallout of decisions that had already been made. Resolving the issues took time, and complicated what might have been a relatively simple project had the design-build team been given greater authority earlier in the project.

"The earlier you get a design-builder involved in a project, the better chance you have," Oberlies said, noting that the client will have a better handle on costs, have a better grasp of potential materials, and a more consistent, professional approach to the project overall.

The importance of assembling the proper set of people early on in a project was also true of a project in Nova Scotia. Mistakes were made on the project, a commercial development, but no one corrected the errors.

"They had made some errors in critical assumptions they made early on in the project," he said. "Getting the right people involved early on would have made a difference."